THE

THREE LECTURES

OF

Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb, Esq.,

DELIVERED AT

MADRAS, HYDERABAD (DECCAN) AND BOMBAY,

WITH A BRIEF SKETCH OF HIS LIFE.

PUBLISHED BY

MOULVI HASSAN ALI,

(MOHAMMEDAN MISSIONARY.)

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
PREFACE	1— 5
THE BETTER WAY	6—22
ISLAM	23—38
PHILOSOPHIC ISLAM	39—52

M'd Alexander Russell Webb.

TO

Nawab Mohsanul Mulk Bahadur
Moulvi Syed Mahdi Ali Khan.

As a token of great admiration for his natural eloquence, his unbounded love for his nation, and for his good heart, and in remembrance of many acts of kindness, this little book is dedicated by

HASSAN ALI,
Mohammedan Missionary.

PREFACE.

THE age we live in is an age of inquiry and toleration. Religious rancour and hatred is dying away before the light of education and the progress of knowledge. Such an age is peculiarly favorable to the triumph of truth. The religion of Islam, which was looked upon by some European nations as the worst form of religion, is now beginning to receive recognition from the great thinkers of the West. The spirit of research and inquiry has led some enlightened Christians of Liverpool, in England, to openly declare their faith in Islam. This small band of brave men are actually practising the required forms and ceremonies of our religion. They are offering up prayers five times daily and observing the Fast of Ramzan as we do in India. They are persecuted, but they have faith and patience to bear all like the early Moslems of Mecca.

The three lectures contained in this book are another illustration of the effect of unprejudiced study and research. These lectures were delivered by Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb during his recent visit to India.

Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb was born in the city of Hudson, State of New York, United States of America, on November 9, 1846. His father Alexander Nelson Webb was a leading journalist of the day. Mr. Webb received his early education at the Home School, Glendale, Massachusetts, and completed his higher education at the Claverack College near Hudson. He made considerable progress in his college studies, and after finishing his education followed in the wake of his worthy father and began life as a journalist, purchasing and publishing a weekly paper at Unionville, Missouri. His great abilities and mental capacities made him very successful in his profession. His fame as a journalist spread far and wide. He was offered the city editorship of the St. Joseph (Missouri) *Daily Gazette*. Here also he gave evidences of his great talents. Later on he was called to be associate editor of the St Louis (Missouri) *Morning Journal*. He was afterwards made one of the editors of the *Missouri Republican*, at St. Louis. This

paper is the second oldest and one of the largest daily newspapers in the United States. While engaged on this journal in September, 1887, he was appointed by President Cleveland as Consular Representative of the United States, at Manila, the chief city of the Philippine Islands.

In 1872, or about twenty years ago, Mr. Webb gave up Christianity, as he found that religion to be not in harmony with reason and justice. For some years he had no religion at all, but this state of mind could not last long. A thought entered his mind that he should try to study the Oriental religions, and in 1881 he began the earnest study of the Eastern faiths. He had access to a most excellent library of about 13,000 volumes. He had then at his disposal time to spend from four to seven hours a day in this new field. He began with Buddhism. Not finding satisfaction in Buddhism he took up Islam. Four years ago he became satisfied that Islam was the only true religion: "Islam," to use his own words, "is founded upon that eternal truth which has been handed down to man from age to age by the chosen Prophets of God, from Moses to Mohammed. It is the only system known to man which is strictly in harmony with reason and science. It is elevating and refining in its tendencies, and develops the higher, nobler elements of humanity when it is faithfully, wisely and intelligently followed." At the time when Mr. Webb embraced our religion he had never seen a Mohammedan. Four years ago I had the pleasure of seeing one of his letters addressed to Mirza Golam Ahmad of Kadian in Punjab, when I had gone there on my missionary tour. In this letter he had expressed his faith in Islam. A Parsee gentleman, of Bombay, happening to go to Manila, was the means of opening a correspondence between Mr. Webb and Mr. Budruddin Abdulla Kur, of Bombay. Mr. Budruddin published some of his interesting letters in the local newspapers. In one of these letters Mr. Webb expressed his great desire that some one should go to preach Islam in the free country of America. Hajee Abdulla Arab, the Mohammedan merchant of Bombay, who had emigrated to Medina and was carrying on trade in Jeddah, happened to see the correspondence that had passed between Mr. Webb and Mr. B. Kur. The Hajee took a very deep interest in the conversion of Mr. Webb. He opened direct correspondence with him, the ultimate result of which was that Hajee Abdulla Arab went to Manila to see Mr. Webb. This was the first time when Mr. Webb saw a Mussulman. I am glad that he saw the best Mussulman of India. Hajee Abdulla Arab, though a native of India, possesses those noble qualities which once adorned the early followers of Islam. His

perfect trust in God, his noble zeal for serving the cause of Islam, his self-sacrificing spirit, and above all his purity of heart which is reflected in his noble face, made a deep impression on Mr. Webb. The Hajee was also very much pleased to see Mr. Webb and his little family. The good-natured wife of Mr. Webb and her three children are also Moslems. In Manila the plan for the propagation of Islam in America was discussed, and it was finally decided that Hajee Abdulla Arab was to take upon himself the task of collecting the necessary funds and Mr. Webb was to resign his post of Consul General of the United States and become the leader of the Islamic mission in America. Hajee Abdulla Arab asked Mr. Webb to visit some of the important towns of India before going to New York, which was to be the headquarters of the Islamic propaganda. Now Mr. Webb is in India and is soon going to leave us. I joined Mr. Webb in Bombay and accompanied him in his visit to Poona, Hyderabad (Deccan) and Madras. I was nearly two months with him. It gives me great pleasure to say that I found Mr. Webb a *pucca** *Mussulman*. In my humble opinion he is the man for the great work he has undertaken. I think he has been selected by God for the great mission. His extensive knowledge, his masterly pen, and his burning eloquence will be of great help in the spread of Islam in the new world. We could not find a better man. He came out to the East as a representative of a great nation, but he is now returning home as a representative of a great faith—the faith of the Great Prophet of Islam. He carries with him to the New World the prayers and good wishes of the whole Moslem world. The reader will find in his lectures some explanation of the plan he is going to pursue for the spread of Islam in America. May God in His Mercy crown the efforts of Mr. Webb with complete success!

Mr. Webb is not a dry rationalistic Moslem, but his heart is full of love for God and His Prophet. God has been pleased to open his heart to the secret philosophy of Islam. He knows the *spirit* of Islam. To him has been opened the sacred treasure of our religion—the treasure which was possessed by Imam Al Ghazzali and Moulana Room. Had he not been possessed of this living fountain there would have been very little hope of his success; but with this ever-flowing fountain in his heart there is every hope of complete success.

HASSAN ALI.

* Proper, or true.

THE BETTER WAY.

At the requisition of Anjuman Himayet-i-Islam, a very large and influential meeting of the Mohammedans of Madras was held on Sunday, December 11, 1892, in Aziz Bagh, at 3 o'clock P. M. Nawab Mohammed Mahmoud Khan Bahadur was voted to the Chair. As requested by the Chairman, Moulvi Hassan Ali, the Mohammedan Missionary, introduced Mr. Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb to the meeting. Mr. Webb addressed the meeting for over an hour. The lecture was translated into Urdu by Moulvi Hassan Ali for the benefit of those who could not understand English.

The following is Mr. Webb's address in full: A few months ago I was talking with an Englishman regarding the relative merits of Mohammedanism and the system erroneously called Christianity, as effective methods of securing salvation. He had firmly declared his belief in a conscious existence after the death of the body, and also averred that Christianity was the best and only system known, through and by which man could attain to that *post mortem* condition known to Christians as the Kingdom of Heaven. I imagined that he was not really satisfied with the Christian system, and I endeavored to show him some of its defects which are plainly apparent when the light of reason is turned upon it. After I had finished he said:

"There is a great deal of truth in what you say of Christianity; but can you show me a better system?"

Now, that is a question which has been asked by thousands upon thousands of thoughtful, honest, broad-minded people who follow Christianity in a half-hearted, doubtful way, simply because they know of no other system, or, rather, because their prejudices and habits of thought have prevented them from examining carefully the character and tendencies

of the one true religion—Islam. There is no religious system known to humanity that is, and has been for centuries, so thoroughly misrepresented and misunderstood, by so-called Christians, as that taught by our Prophet. The prejudice against it is so strong among the English-speaking people of the globe, that even the suggestion that it may be true and, at least, worthy of a careful, unprejudiced investigation is usually received with a contemptuous smile, as if such a thing was too palpably absurd to be considered seriously. It may surprise you to hear that it is generally and quite firmly believed among the Christians of America and Europe that Mohammedanism has been clearly and satisfactorily shown to be a false system, followed by blood-thirsty fanatics, and that all its tendencies are materialistic and degrading. It would astonish and amuse you to know of some of the absurd ideas that have taken hold of the Anglo-Saxon mind regarding Islam and its followers. And yet you cannot justly blame us Americans nor our European cousins for having these ideas, for they are the results of centuries of malignant misrepresentation born of spiteful jealousy, gross ignorance and wicked fanaticism. The early fathers of the Christian Church lied most vigorously and persistently about our Prophet and his teachings, as well as about the Moslem Brotherhood, in the days when it was the crowning glory of the world. Petrarch, by the way, declared that these same Church fathers were the greatest liars on earth. But Petrarch might have been unduly prejudiced, for it is recorded that his sister was seduced by the holy (?) Pope John XXII., and he had witnessed some of the vile orgies of the Papal court at Avignon. But anyone who reads Professor Draper's "Intellectual Development of Europe" will understand how much to believe of the declarations of the early professional Churchmen.

When Moslem Spain was the centre of an exalted civilization, the home of wealth, education and refinement, and the fountain-head of the material arts and sciences, Christian Europe was wallowing in dirt, degradation and barbarism, and inventing all sorts of falsehoods concerning Islam, prompted by their hatred and jealousy of a people who were immeasurably their superiors in every respect. This spirit of animosity has descended from generation to generation, and its influence is plainly to be seen in nearly all the literature extant concerning Mohammed and Mohammedanism written by Christian authors. Every Christian author who has given the world a work depreciating the character of our Prophet and his teachings, has drawn his inspiration from the old and biased Christian sources, and has aided in perpetuating the

falsehoods and false opinions of centuries ago. It is only when men like John Davenport and Godfrey Higgins dig under the rubbish of false history and bring to light some portions of the truth, that the English-speaking world gets glimpses of that eternal verity which rules the lives of so many millions of the human race.

The Western mind is also prejudiced against Mohammedans and their religion by the newspaper and magazine contributions of the Christian missionaries who come to the East to try to convert the Asiatics. True, they meet with little or no success, but that is not due to a lack of zeal or earnestness. And yet you cannot justly blame these missionaries for misrepresenting you and your religion, for, in the majority of cases, they really believe they are telling the truth. They don't know any better, and their ignorance should be considered as mitigating their faults. As a rule, they are people of limited education and experience, and strong prejudices. They start with the firm conviction that they are right in their religious belief and that everybody else is wrong—hence their desire is to show the followers of other systems how far wrong they are. All they know of Mohammedanism they have acquired from the writings of ignorant Christians and, in their ignorance, they are disposed to magnify, distort and exaggerate the acts and expressions of Mohammedanism. But because they do so it is not a valid reason why you should despise and hate them—that would be diametrically opposed to the spirit of our Prophet's teachings—your duty is to be patient with them, to try to teach them the right way—to lead them out of the darkness of ignorance into the light of truth. The Holy Koran teaches us that if we do this we will receive a great reward. Show them the true path, patiently and earnestly, and if they stubbornly refuse to walk in it, they will suffer and you will have the happy consciousness of having done your duty to God and your fellow-man.

And why is Islam the better way—the true and only way to salvation? Because it is founded upon that eternal truth which has been handed down to man from age to age, by the chosen Prophets of God from Moses to Mohammed, *Hazrat Mohammed Sallalaho Alehe Wassulim.* Because it *is* that eternal truth. Because it is the only system that will satisfy the longings of the soul for a higher existence. Because it is the only system known to man which is strictly in harmony with reason and science. Because it is free from degrading superstitions, and appeals directly to human rationality and intelligence. Because it makes every man individually responsible for every act he commits and every thought he thinks, and

does not encourage him to sin by teaching him a vicarious atonement. Because it is elevating and refining in its tendencies, and develops the higher, nobler elements of humanity when it is faithfully, wisely and intelligently followed.

Now I am aware that this declaration will cause those Christians who hear it, to smile and ask me to go among the lower classes of Mohammedans and see if I can find any of the effects of the exalting, ennobling influences of Islam. I have been asked this question since I have been in India and I want to meet it right here.

If we are to judge a religious system by the moral and social character of the masses of its professed followers, Christianity will be so thoroughly condemned that it will speedily pass out of existence. Take a professed Mohammedan and compare him with a professed Christian of the same intellectual calibre, the same education and the same opportunities for obtaining secular knowledge and I am confident that the Mohammedan will show a cleaner moral record and higher spiritual perceptions than the Christian. Some of the most wretchedly degraded and fanatically superstitious people I have ever met in my life called themselves Christians. Of course they were *not* Christians, nor did they have even the remotest conception of the true teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, but they believed, or claimed to believe, in the Christian dogmas. Now every Mussulman knows that it requires something more to make a true Mohammedan than the parrot-like repetition of certain words or sentences. Because a man *says* he is a Mohammedan it does not follow that he comprehends or lives up to the spirit of the teachings of our Prophet; if he does not do so he cannot properly be taken as an example of the effects or tendencies of Islam. No religious system can fairly be judged by the acts and expressions of its professed followers; its fully established fundamental teachings and tenets only should guide us in forming an opinion of it.

And here let me assure you that there is nothing in the Islamic system that tends to immorality, impurity, social degradation, superstition nor fanaticism; on the contrary, it leads on to all that is purest and noblest in the human character, and when you see a professed Mohammedan, who is unclean in his person and habits, who is untruthful, cruel, intolerant, irreverent or fanatical, you may at once conclude that he is not a true follower of Islam and that he fails utterly to grasp the spirit of the religion he professes.

And now let us consider briefly some of the salient principles—the most prominent features of our religion, *viz.;* the Unity of God, the inspiration of our Prophet, cleanliness,

prayer, fasting, fraternity, alms-giving, and pilgrimage. These may be said to form the foundation of the system; and I believe that an understanding of them is all that is necessary to commend the system to any intelligent person.

The truth of the Unity of God is apparent in all the manifestations of nature and has been clearly and unmistakably taught by the founder of every religion known to man. It is a historical fact that the Christian dogma of the Trinity was invented by the Bishop of Antioch 300 years after the death of Jesus, and that the latter never taught it and never heard of it. Idolatry and a multiplicity of gods have invariably been the inventions of misguided men and such doctrines were never taught by truly inspired religious teachers.

Watch the course of nature if you are disposed to believe that it is the work of several gods. We see everything in the Universe moving regularly and systematically under the guidance of an unseen power. The planets revolve steadily and unswervingly in their orbits; the seasons come and go, the winds rise out of the unfathomed depths and go howling like demons through space or fan our heated brows as gently as a mother's kiss; the trees slowly rise out of the earth, spread their branches in cooling shade, or burst forth in a glorious bloom; the tiny plant expands until it can pour forth its tribute to the glory of God in fragrant blossoms; under fixed laws the fruits and grain appear as food for man and the grass and herbage for the animals; water falls from the clouds to revive and nourish the parched and thirsty earth; all the manifestations of terrestrial and celestial life and force are governed by a master hand that permits no change or variation in their general course.

How grandly and simply the Holy Koran expresses some of the signs of God!

"Verily God causeth the grain and the date-stone to break forth; He bringeth forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living. This is God!"

"He causeth the dawn to break, and hath ordained the night for rest, and the sun and the moon for computing time."

"And it is He who hath ordained the stars for you, that ye may be guided thereby in the darknesses of the land and of the sea!"

"And it is He who sendeth down rain from Heaven; and We bring forth by it the germs of all the plants, and from them bring We forth the green foliage and the close-growing grain; and from the palm-trees the low-hanging date-clusters out of their sheaths; and gardens of grapes, and the olive, and the

pomegranite, like and unlike. Look, ye, on their fruits when they fruit and ripen. Truly, herein are signs unto people who believe."

From the standpoint of human reason, which is the most rational conclusion—that there is one God or three or more whose power controls the Universe? Spiritual science demonstrates, beyond doubt, the Unity of God, while evidences of the truth of this doctrine greet us at every turn in our daily lives. These evidences will be convincing to any intelligent man who will throw aside his prejudices and consider them carefully.

What proof have we of the inspiration of our Prophet? The proofs are ample and abundant, but in order to present them fully and concisely I would need more time than is at my disposal now, and would be obliged to enter upon the discussion of the philosophic side of Islam, which is much broader and deeper than the average Mussulman imagines. But we really need no stronger proofs than the Holy Koran, the character of its and the Prophet's teachings, and the well-authenticated traditions and records of his life. No man could have lived as he did, taught as he did and accomplished what he did with no power animating and guiding him but the impulses of fallible human reason. One of the first things to impress me, after I began the study of Islam, was the persistent, steadfast earnestness of our Prophet in the face of obstacles and discouragements that would have utterly defeated an ordinary man. He evidently believed fully and perfectly what he taught. Had he been a man of ordinary mentality, vacillating and uncertain in his ways, and given to following visionary projects, his sincerity might have been less valuable as evidence; but we find that from boyhood to youth and manhood he was remarkably well-balanced mentally, and earnest, honest and rational in everything he undertook. His moral character, too, was far above that of the average boy and youth of his time, and his steady, reliable course of life won for him the love and esteem of all with whom he came in contact. Wealth, power and an exalted social position were within his grasp, and he could have realized every human ambition and gratified every human desire and impulse had he chosen to avail himself of the worldly advantages offered to him. But he chose the better way; he turned his back upon comfort and luxury, sacrificed all that makes life dear to the average man, and suffered insult, persecution and extreme privation in order to teach the truth to his fellow-men. These facts taken in connection with the character of his teachings

should be sufficient to convince any man that he was truly inspired.

If you will carefully analyze those teachings you will find that, in their ethical aspect, they are exactly in harmony with the ethical teachings of Moses, Abraham, Jesus, and every other truly inspired prophet known to history. The system he promulgated differs from that previously given to man, because our Prophet's mission was to present a thorough and complete code, the general purpose of which was to correct the abuses and destroy the errors that had grown about the doctrines taught by his prophetic predecessors. His manifest purpose was to win mankind from idolatry, and to present a series of rules or laws which, if followed faithfully and intelligently, would draw men closer to God and make them purer and cleaner, mentally as well as physically, and better in every respect. He accomplished this mission fully, and was not called hence until he had seen the Islamic system firmly established in the hearts and minds of his followers.

Of course, at this time, we can consider the Islamic system only in its popular or exoteric aspect. As before stated, it has a deeper, more philosophic aspect than is apparent at a first glance. But its chief beauty, viewed superficially, is its perfect adaptability to the spiritual needs of all classes of humanity, from the humblest laborer to the most advanced thinker and man of letters. There is nothing in it that does violence to reason or common-sense or that is in any degree contrary to the natural instincts of justice and mercy. It requires no belief in the supernatural, nor the adoption of any absurd superstitions or impossible theories. Purity of thought, word and deed, perfect mental and physical cleanliness, and steady, unwavering aspiration to God, coupled with pure, unselfish, fraternal love, are the principal ends sought, and the means are as perfect as it is possible for man to conceive of.

Our Prophet forcibly declared that prayer was the cornerstone of religion, and he laid greater stress upon this than upon any other feature of his system. In order to show the solemnity and importance of prayer more plainly, as well as to secure the carrying out of another principle, the "Woozoo," or ablution was ordered. It was his evident intention to impress upon his followers the idea of cleanliness in such ways as were the most effective and permanent, and in the rule of ablution, as well as in other rules, we readily see that he understood and appreciated the force of habit. No Mussulman who prays the required number of times daily ever thinks of praying without thinking also of his "Woozoo," and thus he is

reminded five times a day, at least, that he should have clean hands, face and feet, and in responding to the calls of nature he is cleanly to the last degree—far more so than the average man of any other faith. Thus he acquires habits of personal cleanliness which he cannot break away from without breaking away from his religion. All the evidence at hand, bearing upon the subject, tends to show that our Prophet not only intended that the hands, feet, face and private parts should be kept perfectly clean, but that all parts of the body and the clothing should be clean when we turn our face toward the Kaaba and our hearts toward God. In my opinion the Mussulman who prays in soiled clothing violates the spirit of the law, no matter how thoroughly and carefully he has performed his "Woozoo." I believe, also, that the floors of mosques and other places of prayer should be as nearly perfectly clean as it is possible to make them.

"But," someone may ask, "all Mussulmans are not so distressingly and painfully clean, are they?"

I regret to say that I have met some who were not, but I think that was because they failed to grasp the meaning of our Prophet's teachings. His apparent purpose was to foster and encourage cleanliness by the force of habit. When a man once gets into the habit of doing anything at a certain time his mind naturally reverts to that thing when the stated time arrives. To establish a good habit we usually commence to follow it from a sense of duty, and if it always comes to us as a duty it is much more liable to cling to us than if it is a matter of inclination. This is one of the points of the superiority of Islam over the so-called Christian system. In the latter the follower is taught that it is very meritorious to be clean and to pray, and that he ought to observe these rules—that is, of course, when he feels like doing so. If left to his own inclinations, man is liable to do those duties which are the easiest and most comfortable for him, or to his material, earthly advantage.

The same ideas may be applied to prayer. Our Prophet taught that it was indispensable. Suppose that he had said:

"Prayer is a good thing; you ought to pray; I would advise you to pray five times a day—if you can make it convenient. Pray often—whenever you can."

How much praying do you suppose there would be done to-day among the Mussulmans of the world? Very little I can assure you—just about as much as there is done among the masses of Christians to-day. The Bible says: "Pray without ceasing" and in the most forcible terms exhorts to prayer and fasting; but in my long and extensive experience among

orthodox Christians I have found many who do not pray at all, some who pray once a day,—when they retire at night and some who pray twice—when they retire at night and when they get out of bed in the morning. I have never met one who was in the habit of praying oftener than twice a day and none who ever made his ablutions regularly before praying.

A professed Christian once said to me: "Oh yes that's all very well, but when a Christian prays he means it—it comes from his heart, but when a Mussulman prays he does so mechanically and there is no meaning in his words."

I do not believe that that is the rule. There are thousands of Christians who repeat the Lord's Prayer and "Now I lay me down to sleep," without a thought of what the words mean, and just as mechanically and parrot-like as any Mussulman ever did. But the Mussulman has an advantage even if he does repeat the words of his prayer mechanically; the prostrations and genuflections keep him constantly reminded of his duty and prevent his thoughts from wandering off elsewhere. If he prays five times a day he must, of necessity, get as much soul into these five prayers as the Christian does in one short one, and I am inclined to believe that he accomplishes considerably more.

But if the Mussulman prays listlessly and indifferently it is because he has failed to comprehend the Prophet's teachings, and not because the system is faulty. We are clearly taught that prayer, to be effective, must proceed from the heart, and one of the purposes of the ablution is to prepare the mind to throw off its worldly concerns and concentrate itself wholly upon the words spoken and the prostrations and genuflections performed. We are to follow the idea of presenting ourselves before God physically and mentally clean, and to address Him soulfully and reverently. Those who have read the words of Imam Al Ghazzali can discern in prayer a vast deal more than empty words and in the Islamic system a most effective means of leading people into the habit of prayer, even when they are not induced to pray by their own inclinations.

A Mussulman told me once that he was rather inclined to believe, sometimes, that it was not necessary to follow strictly the methods of prayer followed in the days of our Prophet and his immediate successors; and when I asked him his reason for thinking so, he said it was because the Arabs were not naturally a praying people, and some hard and fast rule was necessary in order to get them into the habit of praying. I called his attention to the conditions prevalent among those who have adopted European ideas and customs, and convinced him, I think, that there was just as much of a necessity for a hard

and fast rule to-day as there was 1,200 years ago. If those ideas, habits and customs, which we group under the name of 19th century civilization, are calculated to produce and encourage a disposition to pray I have failed utterly to discover it, and I have lived within that civilization all my life.

Man is a creature of habit and, as a rule, when he once drops into a groove he rarely gets out of it without an unusual effort, unless he does so in order to follow something a little nearer to the earth. If he acquires the habit of praying five times a day it will cling to him until he dies, and his prayer will increase in earnestness and soulfulness as his knowledge of the fundamental principles of his religion increases.

One of the wise provisions of the Islamic system is the rule relative to congregational prayer. The Mussulman is taught that he should always pray in company with others when it is possible for him to do so. Now there are several very good and sufficient reasons for this rule which can only be discussed under the head of Islamic Philosophy; we can only look, now, at its outward aspect. In the first place it is calculated to break down caste distinctions and place the servant and his master upon a common level before God, in whose presence all men are equal. The beggar, the merchant, the shopkeeper, mechanic, millionaire, the professional man all stand elbow to elbow as brothers in the mosque at the time of prayer, and when a number of Mussulmans come together anywhere at the stated hours they are, in duty, bound to cast aside social distinctions and pray together. It is also the duty of the Mussulman to pray wherever he may happen to be when the hour of prayer arrives; or, if the place is unsuitable, to seek a better one. It is a severe blow to the pride of a young man when he must kneel in the presence of his non-praying companions or retire from their company for the avowed purpose of praying.

In fact, the tendency of all the rules relating to prayer is to secure honesty and frankness of purpose, complete devotion to religion, and soulful, hearty worship of the one true God. The word Islam means, literally, resignation to the will of God, and hence prayer, in its purest, most perfect aspect, must be the very essence of the system.

It is generally admitted that a man may call himself a Mussulman if he simply declares his belief in the Unity of God and the inspiration of the Prophet, but he certainly cannot be called a true follower of Islam unless he prays from the very depths of his heart and makes the purpose of his prayer to bring his soul nearer to God.

Probably the most curious and absurd objection I have ever heard against Islam was in connection with the subject of

prayer. I was talking with an Englishman upon the general subject of Mohammedanism and after I had replied to a number of objections he said:

"Well, there is one thing about Mohammedans that would prevent my becoming one; and that is that every one of them is duck-legged and has knees in his trousers from sitting on his legs and feet so much in prayer."

After I had, to some extent, recovered from my surprise I replied: "In my opinion, it is very much more to one's advantage to go into Paradise duck-legged and with knees in his trousers than not to get in at all."

And since that time whenever I see a Mussulman who is duck-legged and has knees in his trousers I, at once, have a feeling of respect for him for I know that he is attending to his religious duties.

The subject of prayer leads us, quite naturally, to that of fasting, which is one of the most important features of the Islamic system. In the doctrines of every religion, fasting appears as one of the prominent articles of discipline. Jesus taught it repeatedly and emphatically and insisted upon it as one of the first necessities of spiritual development, but the designers and architects of the so-called Christian system failed to present it as a fixed and inviolable law and hence it has fallen into desuetude, particularly among the Protestants. Some Roman Catholics still make a pretence of fasting but I never heard of a Protestant who fasted.

The Holy Koran says:

"O Believers! a fast is prescribed to you, as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may fear God."

This is a fixed law and it is obeyed, with more or less sincerity, in every Mohammedan community on earth, during the month of Ramzan in every year. Whether, in these degenerate days, the results are what the fast is intended to produce may be questioned in many cases, but there are, undoubtedly, many other cases in which a vast amount of spiritual good is attained.

From the fact that every inspired religious teacher, from the beginning of history to the time of our Prophet, taught his followers to fast, and that all those who have attained to high spiritual conditions in any part of the world, have urged the same practice, it is reasonable to infer that there is some valid reason for it. It is a well-established fact that the lower bodily health and strength become, the more vivid and intense become the psychic powers. Anyone who will try the experiment will find that a fast of twenty-four hours will increase his sensitiveness very perceptibly and also make his mental powers

brighter and more active. We can think with greater facility and control our thoughts more easily when our stomachs are empty than when we have eaten a hearty meal.

In view of all the discoveries of materialistic science it is quite plain that there is something more in fasting than a meaningless form, a foolish superstition, or even a method of discipline. Its true purpose is to relieve the soul of the burden of earthly desires and thoughts and prepare it for the reception of spiritual truth. Or we may say that it is the cleansing and purifying of the soul so that it may be in a fit condition to appear before that higher spirit which dwells within every man.

But at this time we have only to do with the disciplinary results of the fast, which are the most beneficial to those who perform this duty solemnly and sincerely. Even if it is performed mechanically, and without any idea of its higher purposes, it takes the Mussulman a little further along the road toward spiritual perfection than he would go if he made no attempt to fast. Of course, the more earnest and sincere the faster is, the higher will be the results obtained and the greater will be the reward hereafter; the man is left to choose for himself the course he will pursue knowing, at the same time, that the law requires him to fast. Obedience to God is meritorious, but earnest, cheerful obedience is far better than reluctant and indifferent compliance.

Generally speaking the fast gives one month in the year to God, as one day in the week and five times in the day are given to Him. During this month the Mussulman is not only required to refrain from food from dawn to sunset of each day, but the fast is considered broken and ineffectual if at any time during that period he gives way to anger or any passion or indulges in slander or falsehood. This curbing of the propensities of the lower nature is just as much a part of the fast as refraining from taking food. Now is it possible for a man to be virtuous for one month in each year without having his general character benefited to some extent during the other eleven months?

But the real purpose of the fast is higher than the mere temporary discipline of the lower or animal nature; it is a wise provision which, if followed intelligently, sincerely and prayerfully, will inevitably bring about a closer communion between the soul and that spirit of God which the Holy Koran tells us is nearer to man than his jugular vein.

The Holy Koran says:—

"Verily there is pardon and a great reward for those who

fear their Lord in secret. And be your converse hidden or open, He verily knoweth the inmost recess of your breasts."

Now if this is true the purposes and efficacy of fasting and prayer or meditation are at once apparent. The abstaining from food brings the soul forces into ascendency over the animal inclinations and the soul is voluntarily presented and laid open to God. Can anyone doubt that great good must come from such an exercise?

Our esteemed brother Hassan Ali, the earnest and faithful Mohammedan missionary, has written an essay on Fasting which contains a number of valuable ideas and suggestions. It is printed in Urdu and should be in the hands of every thoughtful Mussulman in India.

It was apparently our Prophet's purpose to induce his followers to acquire the habit of observing the fast as well as the habits of prayer and cleanliness, realizing that these habits would descend to their children and their children's children from generation to generation, thus keeping mankind in the true path even if *all* did not walk closely in it. Twelve hundred years have passed and the month of Ramzan is looked forward to and observed by the masses of Mohammedans throughout the world. They have acquired the habit and it clings to them, doing more good than the masses have any idea of.

No one who has given the Islamic system careful and unprejudiced study can fail to see how wisely and judiciously it was constructed and how broad and effective its results must be if it is followed intelligently and faithfully. We all know the force of habit, good or bad, and how easy it is to drift into vice and sin. It seems very much easier and more comfortable to be wicked than to be good in this generation. The poet has truly said:

> "Vice is a monster of such frightful mien,
> That to be hated needs but to be seen,
> But seen too oft, familiar with its face,
> We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

If we once begin to stray away from the path of religious habit and duty it is very easy for us to drift with the tide of worldliness out into the broad and tempestuous ocean of sin and despair. Hence the wisest course for us to pursue is to study our religion until we arrive at an intelligent comprehension of its principles and purposes, and then to follow its forms and duties earnestly, honestly and sincerely.

And now let us glance at another of the most important features of the Islamic system, viz., fraternity. One of the first acts of our Prophet after he had taken up his abode in

Medina was to commence the organization of the Moslem Brotherhood; that fraternity of earnest, loyal souls which was destined to create a grand and glorious revolution throughout the entire East. Through all his life and teachings we find a strong sentiment of brotherly love and devotion running like a thread of silver through a field of gold; it permeated all the thoughts and actions of the early Moslems and was a potent factor in bringing about their grand and glorious achievements at arms.

A story is told of an old man who, on his death-bed called his sons to him to receive his last blessing. When they had assembled and stood in tearful attention waiting to hear his words, he told one of them to bring a number of small sticks. The son obeyed and in obedience to his father's command broke one of the sticks with his fingers. His father then told him to put all the sticks together and try to break them, but he found that he could not do so although he brought all his strength to bear upon them.

"You see," said the old man feebly, "how easily you broke the stick when it was away from the others and how difficult it is to break them when they are all together. Herein is a lesson which I want you to keep in mind after I am gone. In union there is strength."

This was apparently the lesson which our Prophet taught his followers, knowing that while they were united in a bond of true fraternity and inspired by sincere devotion to God, they would be invincible. And so long as that spirit of fraternity existed in the Moslem ranks, so long as the fire of brotherly love and devotion burned in the hearts of the defenders of the true faith, so long did Islam continue on its irresistible march toward the zenith of its glory and power. But just as soon as dissension and disunion made their appearance the power of the Moslem arms began to weaken, and the moving column found itself utterly unable to overcome the obstructions that lay in its path. Compare the condition of the Moslem world in the eighth century with what it is to-day and see if you cannot find therein a lesson of great value.

The plain duty of every Mussulman who loves his religion and reveres the memory of our Holy Prophet is to endeavor earnestly and persistently to revive that sentiment of fraternal love which was so prominent in the character of our brethren who lived and loved and worshipped the one true God 1,200 years ago. Those who follow Islam should be brothers before God, and should cultivate within their hearts an unselfish, fraternal love for each other which should in-

fluence their contact and communication with each other throughout their lives. To do this mutual forgiveness and mutual concessions are necessary—let us bear with each other's faults and weaknesses, praying to God for patience and strength and clasping hands honestly and fervently as true brothers should.

There is, there can be, but one true religion although all the numerous and varied systems known to man may have more or less of the one truth underlying them. By careful and unprejudiced study we can readily trace this truth through all the teachings of the prophets. By weeding out the false translations, and interpolations in the New Testament of the Christians we find it plainly taught by Jesus of Nazareth, but he died before his mission was accomplished and failed to formulate a system of practice for the purpose of firmly establishing the truth in the hearts of his followers. It appears quite plain that the majority of his twelve disciples did not understand him and failed utterly to grasp the spirit of his teachings. The present system called Christianity was really built upon the teachings of Paul, about three centuries after the death of Jesus; and Paul not only never saw the Prophet of Nazareth but seems to have had only a very vague idea of what the latter taught.

Our Prophet, the last and greatest of all the prophets, not only taught this great truth to his immediate followers, so that they evidently understood it, but he formulated and firmly established a complete and perfect system of practice calculated to impress it deeply on the hearts of the Arabs and to carry it from generation to generation to all nations in all ages of the world. His mission was fully accomplished before God called him to his reward, and the legacy of truth he left to sin-stricken humanity is the grandest monument that can be conceived in commemoration of his lofty, stainless character and his noble self-sacrifice. It is the plain and unmistakable duty of every Mussulman who loves and reveres the memory of our grand Prophet to use his earnest efforts to assist in planting that monument—Islam—upon the soil of every nation.

It is an old and true saying that, "Truth crushed to earth will rise again." Islam has passed through various stages during the past twelve centuries and, until within a comparatively few years ago, it seemed to be steadily declining under the crushing weight of a grossly materialistic civilization. But there are signs of a great change, of a revival of that old vigor which made it the glory of the world. Its progress in Africa during the past decade has been phenomenal;

it has found a firm foothold in Europe, and with God's help we propose to establish it in liberal progressive America where, I feel confident, the masses of people are waiting to receive it. With all these evidences before you, can you doubt the final result? "*La illaha illala. Mohammed rasoul Allah.*"

ISLAM.

"A very large and influential number of persons of all the communities was present to hear the lecture of Mr. Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb, on Islam, delivered at the Framji Cawasji Institute, on Thursday, the 10th of November, 1892. Among those present were Kazi Mohammed Saleh Abdul Latif Londay, His Excellency, Kadri Beg, Messrs. Henry Balantine, Husney Beg, Ahmedbhai Habibbhai, Musabhai Tharia Topan, Haji Suleman Abdul Wahid Ibrahim Rahimtula, Abdallabhai Lalji, Budruddin Abdulla Kur, Husen Meyan Chorgay, Karsondas Chhabildar, Barrister-at-law, Sundernath Dinanath Khotay, Purshotumdas Vandrawandas, Ardeshir Framji Moos, Ranina, Moulvi Abdul Razzlak, Sayyad Fakhrudin Edroos, Munshi Shaik Ahmed, Mahmud Meyan Sharfuddin Khan, Hasan Meyan Sharfuddin, Amiruddin Tyabji, Najinuddin Tyabji, Fateh Ali Shaik Ahmed, Ibrahim Ahmedi, Mohammed Usoof Khat Khatay, Moulvi Furahtulla, Munshi Bauker Abdul Gani Muhimtulay, Haji Abdulla Arab, and about 500 others.

"On the motion of Mr. Budruddin Abdulla Kur, Kazi Mohammed Saleh Londay was voted to the chair."

Mr. Webb addressed as follows:

I have been requested to tell you why I, an American, born in a country which is nominally Christian, and reared under the drippings of an orthodox Presbyterian pulpit, came to adopt the faith of Islam as my guide in life. I might reply promptly and truthfully that I adopted this religion because I found, after protracted study, that it was the best and only system adapted to the spiritual needs of humanity; but this reply would be altogether too general to be satisfactory. Now, instead of telling you in detail how and why I became a Mussulman, I will try to tell you what Mohammed really taught, and endeavor to show that his religious system has a much more valid claim to the careful, unprejudiced attention of the Western world than the average Christian is willing to con-

cede. It is manifestly impossible in a single lecture to present a full and complete exposition of the Islamic system—one that will satisfy the inquiring mind. I will, therefore, be compelled to generalize to some extent. And here let me say that I was not born, as some boys seem to be, with a fervently religious strain in my character. I will not even assert that I was a good boy, such as mothers sometimes point out as shining examples for their own sons. I attended the Presbyterian Sunday School of my native town, when I couldn't avoid it, and listened with weariness and impatience to the long, abstruse discourses of the minister, while I longed to get out into the glad sunshine and hear the more satisfying sermons preached by God Himself through the murmuring brooks, the gorgeous flowers and the joyous birds. When I reached the age of 20, and became practically my own master, I was so tired of the restraint and dulness of the Church that I wandered away from it, and never returned to it. As a boy I found nothing in orthodox Christianity calculated to win me to it, and in later years I encountered convincing evidences of its grave errors and insufficiency as a means of securing salvation, or of elevating and purifying the human character. Fortunately I was of an inquiring turn of mind; I wanted a reason for everything, and I found that neither laymen nor clergy could give me any rational explanation of their faith, but either told me that such things were mysteries or that they were beyond my comprehension. After trying in vain to find something in the Christian system to satisfy the longings of my soul and meet the demands of reason, I drifted into materialism, and for several years had no religion at all. About eleven years ago I became interested in the study of the Oriental religions, beginning with Buddhism as students of the Eastern system usually do. I will not weary you with details further than to say that at that time I had access to a most excellent library of about 13,000 volumes, from four to seven hours a day at my disposal, and that I was intensely in earnest in my efforts to solve the mysteries of life and death, and to know what relation the religious systems of the world bore to these mysteries. My mind was in a peculiarly receptive, yet exacting and analytical, condition, absolutely free from the prejudices of all creeds, and ready to absorb the truth, no matter where it might be found. Firmly materialistic, I looked at first to the advanced school of materialistic science and found that it was just as completely immersed in the darkness of ignorance as I was. It could tell me the name of every bone, muscle, nerve and organ of the human body, as well as its position and purpose or function; but it could *not*

tell me the real difference between a live man and a dead one. It could tell me the name of every tree, plant and flower, and designate the species to which each belonged, and what were its apparent properties and attributes; but it could not tell me how and why the tree grew and the flower bloomed. It was absolutely certain that man was born, lived a brief space and died, but whence he came or whither he went were riddles which they confessed themselves utterly unable to solve. "Those matters belong to the Church," said a scientist to me. "But the Church knows absolutely nothing of them," I replied. "Nor do I—nor does science," was the helpless, hopeless way in which he dismissed the question from the conversation.

I saw Mill and Locke, Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Huxley, and many other more or less learned writers discoursing with a great show of wisdom concerning protoplasm and protogen and monads, and yet not one of them could tell me what the soul was or what became of it after death. "But no one can tell you that," I fancy I hear some one say. That is one of the greatest errors that poor, blind humanity ever made; there are many people who have solved this mystery, but they are not the materialistic followers of any creed. I have spoken so much of myself in order to show you that adoption of Islam was not the result of misguided sentiment, blind credulity, or sudden emotional impulse, but that it was born of earnest, honest, persistent, unprejudiced study and investigation, and an intense desire to know the truth. And now let us see what Islam really is, and you will readily understand, I think, why I have accepted it. If anyone should ask me to reply at once to the question: "What do the Mohammedans believe?" I would be as completely unable to reply, without hesitation, as I would be if asked: "What do the Christians believe?" The disposition of the Christians of all ages, from the days of Constantine to the present, to amplify and adorn their religion with ideas of their own has been shared by many of the professed followers of the Arabian Prophet, and there are prevalent among the Moslems of our time many points of belief which were never taught by Mohammed, and which are not entitled to a place in the true faith of Islam. The wonderful fecundity of the human mind is amply shown by the vast variety of conceptions—or misconceptions—which may be found among the religious doctrines of mankind, and which were never a part of the original fundamental principles, but are the results of the biased speculations and misconceptions of those who have assumed to be religious authorities. It is a well-known fact that every one of the fifty odd different Chris-

tian sects bases its system of doctrines upon the Bible, and that the followers of each sect appeals to that much-abused book for proof that their belief is right and reasonable and logical, and that all the others are more or less erroneous. Wade through the tons of Mohammedan and Christian literature extant, if you have the patience, and go among the followers of the various sects and listen to their arguments, if you desire to acquire a perfect realization of the fertility of the human intellect and the elastic possibilities of religious literature. If you do not speedily find yourselves in a condition of doubt and perplexity closely bordering upon despair, you will have failed to follow the intricacies of the arguments put before you. If, from the multitudinous and multifarious conceptions you will encounter you can form a positive and satisfying opinion as to what Mohammed and Jesus really did or did not teach, you will do much better than anyone who has ever tried the experiment before you. There are certain clearly-defined dogmas which nearly, if not quite all Moslems believe in the abstract, but, with the possible exception of the Sufis, or esoteric Mohammedans, they are greatly divided in their conceptions of the Prophet's teachings.

Orthodox Mohammedanism may be divided into six heads: 1st—Faith in God, the one God, the Creator of all things, who always was and ever will be; the single, immutable, omniscient, omnipotent, all-merciful, eternal God. 2d—Faith in angels, ethereal beings perfect in form and radiant in beauty; without sex, free from all gross or sensual passion and the appetites and infirmities of frail humanity. 3rd—Belief in the Koran as a book of divine revelation given at various times to Mohammed by God or through the Angel Gabriel. 4th—Belief in God's prophets, the most pre-eminent of whom were Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed. 5th—Belief in the resurrection and final judgment when all mankind shall appear before God, who will reward or punish them according to the deeds they have done on earth. Opinions differ, of course, as to the nature of these rewards and punishments. 6th—Belief in predestination, or the inability of man to avoid, by any act of his own, the destiny irrevocably predetermined by God and written down in the eternal book previous to the creation of the world. At the first glance this seems to deprive man of his character as a free agent, but a closer examination shows that it does not do so. It will be seen, therefore, that in its fundamentals it closely resembles esoteric, or so-called Christianity, when the latter is stripped of its objectionable dogmas. From these central points diverge numerous lines which form in the aggre-

gate an elaborate system of faith and worship, the effects of which vary greatly according to the character of its followers. The articles of religious practice are five in number, namely, Prayer, Ablution, Alms, Fasting and Pilgrimage. And now let us endeavor to ascertain from whence this system sprang, by considering who and what our Prophet was. And let me assure you that in seeking for the truths I have found, I have had to overturn a vast deal of rubbish in the shape of false history, false opinions, and false reasoning, before I caught the faint gleam of that priceless jewel which has been preserved to man through all the ages, although the bigots and pharisees of orthodoxy have striven most earnestly to destroy it. In the light of reason and human testimony it has been quite conclusively shown that Mohammed was a pure and holy man who voluntarily gave up all that the world holds dear, in order to obtain a knowledge of the one great spiritual truth; that he suffered ridicule, obloquy, and persecution of the cruelest, most vindictive character in trying to teach this truth to the Arabs, and that he died in extreme squalor and poverty after having fully accomplished his mission. These are facts which are generally admitted even by Christian writers, and it is, therefore, unnecessary to call Mohammedan witnesses. It is said that a young man once asked Jesus what he should do in order to inherit everlasting life. The reply was: "Sell all that thou hast, give to the poor, take up the cross and follow me."

Now, that is exactly what Mohammed did, except that he did not follow Jesus in the sense understood by the orthodox Christian. He sacrificed all he had in the world and bore the cross of trials and suffering faithfully and patiently until he had securely planted the true faith in the East. It has been plainly shown by every writer who has given us anything purporting to be a record of the life of our Prophet, that during his childhood he was remarkable for his quiet, gentle demeanor, his quick intelligence, and his modest, retiring, thoughtful disposition. While he mingled freely with the boys of Mecca he did not acquire any of their coarse and vicious habits. As a youth he was distinguished by his affectionate ways, his frankness and truthfulness under all circumstances, and as a man he was upright, just and generous in his dealings, and was a merchant whose honesty and reliability were unimpeached. So generally was his character recognized that he was called by the people of Mecca: "Al Amin, the Trusty." Does it seem possible that a man with such pronounced and well-grounded principles of morality and integrity followed until the age of fifty, could suddenly change and become what many of the

Christian writers have wickedly declared him to be? I don't believe it. All the prominent Christian authors have been forced to the confession, more or less plainly made, that after protracted study and research, they were utterly unable to form an adequate and satisfying conception of his character. The explanation of their failure is plain—they reasoned from the standpoints of their own materialistic creeds, and facts which would have solved the riddle for them, had they been able to break away from their false opinions and beliefs, were cast aside as valueless. Several of these sapient writers have said in substance: "Mohammed was not *our* kind of a Christian, and, therefore, he *must* have been an impostor. But it troubles us to find that such a truly pure and holy man was not a Christian." Had they understood the teachings of their own Prophet they would not have wondered at this seeming phenomenon. It has been admitted that Mohammed's material prospects were all that the most ambitious young man of his time could have desired, until he began to teach spiritual truth. His relatives were wealthy, and his uncle, Abu Taleb, who took him into his family and became a kind, affectionate and indulgent father to him after the death of his own parents, was one of the wealthiest and most prosperous merchants in Arabia. The guardianship of the Kaaba at Mecca, the incumbent of which office was also Governor of the city, was hereditarily fixed in his family line, and, had he been content to drift with the tide of life as he found it, would certainly have fallen to him together with his uncle's great wealth. Had he been the crafty, ambitious, unprincipled man he is popularly believed by the Christians to have been, he would undoubtedly have waited patiently and kept in favor with his relatives until, in the natural course of events, he must have become one of the foremost men in Arabia, crowned with wealth and high honors, and surrounded by all the comforts, luxuries and grandeur of a worldly life. But he chose the better way, although it led him through a path thickly strewn with sharp stones and cruel thorns, and, from a worldly point of view, filled his life with bitter disappointments, privations, sorrows and sufferings, of the most harrowing description. And herein is a lesson which should sink deeply into the hearts of those who have turned their backs upon the higher way, and are engaged in that mad chase after rupees and comfort which is so deeply engrossing the attention of the greater part of the world. You are probably all familiar with the history of our Prophet's separation from the affairs of the world. He passed long periods in prayer, fasting and meditation, and reduced his diet to dates and barley, his only drink being water. This abstemiousness was continued

to the close of his life, and it is said that sometimes for a whole month he would eat nothing but dates, and those in very small quantities. His favorite place of retirement was a cave on Mount Hara, where he would spend several days at a time in meditation, and where he received his mission to shed the light of truth upon the world—to kindle that fire which in after years burned so brilliantly and filled the entire East with its glorious effulgence. He was often accompanied by his faithful wife, who was the first convert to his doctrines, and who seemed to share with her whole soul his zeal and devotion to his purpose. Whenever he emerged from his retirement and returned to his home in Mecca, he went about doing the good that came to his hands and assisting those who, through sickness or misfortune, were unable to provide for themselves. In this way the greater portion of his own wealth, and that which he had acquired through his marriage with Khadijah melted away.

Now, it is necessary to weigh carefully all these well-known and universally admitted facts concerning our Prophet's life prior, and immediately subsequent to, his inspiration, in order to arrive at a rational conclusion regarding his character, and to make those comparisons between him and the other holy prophets which are inevitable. During the period we have now reached, he made no effort to teach publicly any of the truths which had been revealed to him, and his manner of life seems to have attracted very little attention beyond the circle of his immediate relatives. At this time he was looked upon as a harmless fanatic, who had foolishly sacrificed his brilliant worldly prospects for some reason which was not quite clear to his friends, and in which they took no very great interest. Subsequently he publicly announced his mission, and called down upon himself that bitter, relentless, cruel persecution and storm of ridicule which has been more or less graphically described by the historians. Has there ever been a prophet who attempted to teach the world the one true way to eternal life whose path has been strewn with roses? Not one. The world hates the truth with fiendish malignancy, and calls madly for the blood of him who attempts to teach it. The claim made by Mohammed that aroused the fury and contempt of the Meccans was substantially the same as that made by Jesus of Nazareth, who received similar treatment at the hands of the enraged Jews. He said that he was a prophet and apostle of God, inspired by the Supreme Being to point out to the Arabs the true way to salvation and to redeem them from idolatry and the vices which they had acquired indirectly from following a thoroughly materialistic religion. He repeatedly told his hearers that he

was not a supernatural being but a man, like unto them, with the same physical structure, the same mental endowments, and the same natural inclinations and proclivities; that from the Supreme Spirit he had learned the solution of the mystery of life and death and the true way to eternal life; that he had given up the world that he might teach them this way—had crucified himself that they might live—and this is the only way in which Jesus was ever crucified, all the sophistical arguments and quotations from false history to the contrary notwithstanding. Mohammed claimed to be a prophet sent from God in the same sense that Moses, Abraham, Elias, Jesus, and every other truly inspired prophet claimed to have been sent. He taught no new religious system, but sought to revive that one eternal truth which has been preserved to man from the beginning of the world, and will continue to be preserved as long as the world shall stand. His claim was no more nor less than that made by Jesus, who never claimed to be God nor the son of God in the sense in which some misguided people believe he did. In the 58th verse of the 8th chapter of the Gospel of St. John is a statement attributed to Jesus which has sorely puzzled Bible readers and commentators, but which is a plain, unequivocal statement of all that Jesus claimed to be, when it is properly translated from the original Greek. It reads thus: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was I am." As the verse stands, it is an ungrammatical absurdity and means nothing. The correct translation into English would make it read thus: "Verily, verily I say unto you, I am what Abraham was before me." That is to say, an inspired prophet like Abraham. Jesus admitted that there were other true prophets before him, and some of the Mohammedan doctors insist, and their arguments and evidence are by no means unworthy of consideration, that he plainly prophesied the coming of Mohammed, declaring that the latter would lead his followers into the truth. And I assure you that our Prophet never taught anything that was at all at variance with the true teachings of Jesus; on the contrary, a careful comparison of the true tenets of the faith of Islam with those taught to his disciples by the Prophet of Nazareth cannot fail to show that in their tone and tendency they are identical. Mohammed frequently referred to the Nazarene as "Jesus, the inspired son of Mary," the Holy Prophet sent by God to the Jews, and paid to him the loftiest tributes of love, reverence and esteem; but for the absurd dogmas, misconceptions and superstitions of the system erroneously called Christianity he had nothing but the strongest condemnation. He taught that at certain periods

in the development of humanity a prophet arose from among the people to raise them from the degrading materialism of dogmatic creeds, the unhealthy growths of ambition, selfishness and worldliness, and to guide them into the true path from which the desires of the flesh had led them to stray; that this was God's method of holding humanity in its upward course toward spiritual perfection. He declared that he was the last of a long line of prophets, and that he taught nothing different from the teaching of his predecessors, that his purpose was to renew the one supreme truth in the hearts of his fellow Arabs. The validity of this declaration is apparent when one has some knowledge of the philosophy of Islam. "What!" exclaims the Christian, "and does Islam really contain a philosophy?" Yes, my misguided brother, it is a philosophy as well as a religion, and a pure, perfect, holy philosophy, too. Look about you and see the beauties and wonders of nature, the growth and decay of the trees and flowers, the movements of the planets, the changes of the tides and seasons—all the grand manifestations of nature moving on with steady, majestic regularity under the guidance of an unseen power, which is a dense mystery to materialistic science. The unvarying order which pervades the whole system indicates the power of a master hand. We do not find grapes growing upon cocoanut trees nor figs upon thistles, but each fruit appears and matures upon its own tree; and decays and passes into nothing, if not used for human food. We see the flash of the lightning and hear the roll of the thunder and the shrill shriek of the cyclone, but the average man knows nothing of the irresistible force behind all these manifestations. Science has tried to explain the phenomena, and has failed utterly, although it has discovered that there are certain fixed laws and conditions which govern them and make it possible to foretell their coming. Like Jesus and every other prophet who has taught the true doctrine of salvation, Mohammed found it necessary to present his teachings in two aspects, or rather to divide them into two parts—one for the very few who could comprehend or assimilate the higher truths, and the other for the masses who were so blinded by worldliness and the bonds of the flesh that they could grasp only the materialistic ideas of forms and ceremonies. The Koran and the traditions are full of suggestions of this idea. Jesus said to his disciples: "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, but unto those who are without, all things are done in parables." If Jesus and Mohammed were inspired by God, it is only reasonable to conclude that the mysteries of what we call "Nature" were unfolded to them,

and they were able to teach a higher philosophy than that known to the materialist of to-day. And I tell you frankly, that it was through this exalted philosophy that I was brought to Islam. Every Mussulman who reads his Koran and has any conception whatever of the doctrines of his religion freely concedes that Jesus was an inspired prophet; but he also knows that the system known to-day as Christianity and taught from the pulpits of the so-called Christian churches is no more like the system taught by the Nazarene than is the African Voodoo system or the absurd antics and notions of the Salvation Army. When I talk to a Christian about Islam he promptly declares that it is opposed to civilization, endorses polygamy, has a horribly bloody record, and that its followers are fanatical and intolerant; all this, in his estimation, is true, and ought to condemn any religion. The average ignorant Christian in America—and I suspect he is the same in England—fully believes that every Mohammedan has a harem full of wives where he spends the greater portion of his time when he is not prowling about with sword in hand seeking to kill a Christian. A fairly intelligent Christian once told me that every Mohammedan believed that he could not get a really good place in Paradise until he had killed and eaten a Christian.

"But," said a Parsee to me in Rangoon, "you cannot deny that our present advanced civilization is due to Christianity." "Well I *do* deny it," I said; and then I referred him to the New Testament and to the Sermon on the Mount, and asked him to try to harmonize those principles with what is called Christian civilization. It cannot be done. The cold truth is that this Western civilization has nothing of the true spirit of Christianity in it, but is the legitimate offspring of ambition and selfishness. It is also a well-known fact that the course of Western progress and advancement has always been obstructed by the Christian Church, ever since that Church has had an existence. It has always stood in front of the procession and shouted with uplifted hands: "You mustn't go any further, or you will weaken and degrade me." And then when it has been pushed aside and the irresistible tide has swept past it, it has tried in every way to impede and harass the moving column. And now with marvelous assurance and impudence it says: "See what *we* have done. Look at our glorious *Christian* civilization, and then fall down and worship us." The truth is, and every man can ascertain it for himself, that what is called Christian civilization was born in the 8th century among the Moslems of Spain, while the Christian world was plunged in the depths of ignorance and barbarism.

Professor Draper says: "I have to deplore the systematic manner in which the literature of Europe has contrived to put out of sight our scientific obligations to the Mohammedans. Surely they cannot be much longer hidden. Injustice founded on religious rancour and national conceit cannot be perpetuated forever. . . . The Arab has left his intellectual impress on Europe, as, before long, Christendom will have to confess; he has indelibly written it on the heavens, as anyone may see who reads the names of the stars on a common celestial globe."

Everyone who believes that ours is a Christian civilization, born of Christianity, should read Professor Draper's "Intellectual Development of Europe," or any other honest historical work treating of the subject. Stanley Lane-Poole in his "Moors in Spain" shows that Europe acquired her first knowledge of the arts and sciences from the Moslems, and while showing the degraded condition of the rest of Europe, says: "Whatsoever makes a kingdom great and prosperous, whatsoever tends to refinement and civilization, was found in Moslem Spain." I earnestly hope that the Christians will soon learn to be rational and honest, and that we shall hear no more of this senseless twaddle about *Christian* civilization.

And now let us glance briefly at that great bugbear, polygamy. Almost the first question a Christian asks me is: "Do you believe in polygamy?" "Yes," I reply, "under certain conditions." And last week an educated Mussulman said to me: "Surely you do not believe in polygamy—you would not advocate its introduction in America?" He was clearly surprised when I said that I not only believed in polygamy but would advocate its introduction into the American social system as soon as America had become sufficiently moral and refined to adopt it decently and respectably. Let us look at this question rationally. When our Prophet taught on earth, unlimited polygamy was sanctioned by the laws and social customs of Arabia. He modified the practice by allowing his followers to marry only four wives, telling them plainly that they should not marry any more women than they could treat with equal love and justice. He subsequently declared that no man could love two wives equally, and this declaration practically annulled the privilege of marrying four. It is quite clear that his purpose was to purify the existing social conditions and elevate the domestic relations to a higher moral standard. While polygamy is looked upon in the West as vicious and criminal and subversive of morality and justice, in the East it has quite a different aspect, owing to social traditions and customs, and is considered quite in harmony with

the most exalted ideas of propriety. Now there are many sides to this question, and to discuss it fully would require more time than is at my disposal this evening. I freely admit the fact that the introduction of polygamy at once into our American social system would certainly prove most pernicious; but when the system and its purposes and tendencies are properly understood, and the beneficent moral influences of Islam have produced the effects which they must inevitably produce among an educated and enlightened people, it can and should be advocated. It is absolutely the only remedy for the curses of prostitution and marital infidelity with which America and Europe are most grievously afflicted, and it will elevate our womanhood to that exalted and admirable position which it is fitted by nature to occupy. While Mohammedan law permits polygamy, it does not present it as an article of faith, and no good Mussulman would think of marrying more than one wife unless the conditions existing in his home imperatively demanded such a course, and he could conform to the spirit of the Islamic requirements. One is allowed to marry four wives and no more, if in so doing he does not violate the laws of the land in which he lives, but he may have one wife or none at all without sacrificing any of his religious rights or privileges. One can be just as good a Mussulman, as a monogamist or a bachelor, as he can as a polygamist, and will stand just as well in the estimation of his neighbors.

Go with me into any large American or European city and see the evidences of that resistless torrent of vice and crime that rushes and seethes through the social fabric; go with me to a fashionable ball, reception or dinner party and see the position in which noble woman, one of the grandest works of God, has been placed by the usages and customs of this 19th century civilization; see the honored wives of wealthy educated Christians and their virtuous daughters, exposing to the view of men whose blood and passions are fired by the fumes of alcohol, personal charms which should be seen only in the privacy and purity of the home; take up the newspapers and see the records of divorces, social scandals, and marital woes that fill us with shame and disgust, and then tell me that these so-called Christian laws and Christian customs are good things. And where is the remedy for all this? In Mohammedan laws and customs—in Islamic principles. Christian laws and customs have been tried for many centuries and have failed utterly. Now give Islam a trial.

And now let us touch briefly upon the bloody record of Mohammedanism and the propaganda of the sword. So far as blood-stains are concerned I hardly believe that Mohammedan-

ism has any reason to blush when she compares her garments with those of Christianity. Have you ever read the history of the Inquisition and Crusades? When the Khalif Omar took Jerusalem in 637 he rode into the city by the side of the Patriarch Sophronius, conversing with him concerning its antiquities. Not a drop of blood was shed. But when the Christian Crusaders entered it the brains of young children were dashed against the walls, infants were thrown over the battlements, every woman that could be seized was violated, men were roasted on fires; some were ripped open to see if they had swallowed gold; the Jews were driven into their synagogues and there burned. About 70,000 people, men, women, and children, were cruelly butchered. And this is the testimony of Christian historians, not Mohammedan. It has been clearly shown that our Prophet, as well as the first Caliph, Abu Beker, repeatedly and emphatically directed the Moslem generals to refrain from killing or injuring women, children, and old men; not to destroy the fields of grain or date trees, and to sheath the sword at once upon the surrender of a city. Humanity, mercy, and kindness were insisted upon.

When the Prophet entered Mecca, upon its surrender to him, not a man, woman, or child was killed or ill-treated, and not a single house was plundered, although this was the city in which he had been so shamefully abused and persecuted, and its inhabitants were those who had cruelly wronged him. Why did he not take revenge when the opportunity offered itself? There was not a single sentiment of revenge or malice in his whole being; he was a Prophet of the God of love, truth, justice, and mercy.

Both records are sad enough and bloody enough, Heaven knows, but I am firmly convinced that there is far less fiendishness and blood-thirstiness, and bestiality to be answered for by the Moslems than by the Christians. Did the Christians have a valid warrant in the teaching or conduct of the meek and lowly Jesus, giving them authority to go about murdering, in cold blood, those who did not believe as they did? But of course, they don't do it any more; not because some of them wouldn't like to, but public opinion has changed. It isn't safe to be too enthusiastic and conscienceless and brutal now in making proselytes to one's religion no matter how confidently one may believe in it himself. And when I say to you that Mohammed *never advocated*, *taught*, *nor consented to* the propagation of Islam by means of the sword, and that he severely condemned violence and taking of life in any form, I tell you truths which can readily be verified by any honest,

unprejudiced person who will take the trouble to investigate the matter impartially.

A learned Moslem writer says:—" The remark that the sword is the inevitable penalty for the denial of Islam is one of the gravest of the false charges imputed to this faith by the professors of other religions and arises from the utter ignorance of those who make the accusation. Islam inculcates and demands a hearty and sincere belief in all that it teaches, and that genuine faith which proceeds from a person's heart cannot be obtained by force or violence."

The Holy Koran says:—" Let there be no forcing in religion; the right way has been made clearly distinguishable from the wrong one. If the Lord had pleased, all who are on the earth would have believed together; and wilt thou force men to be believers ?"

Our Prophet himself was as thoroughly unaggressive, non-combative and peace-loving as the typical Shaker, and, while he realized the fact that a policy of perfect non-resistance would speedily have resulted in the murder of himself and every Moslem in Arabia, he urged his followers to avoid, as far as possible, violent collisions with the unbelievers and not to fight unless it was necessary in order to protect their lives. There are a number of accusations made against Mohammedanism, which, even if true, cannot justly be said to have even the remotest relation to the doctrines of Islam; there are zealots and fanatics in all religious bodies, and it is due to their weaknesses that discredit falls upon the faith they profess to follow.

It would be useless to attempt, in a single lecture, to reply to all the false charges made against Mohammedanism by ignorant and prejudiced writers; but at the risk of exhausting your patience, I will refer to one more. It has been said that toleration is unknown among the Moslems. A Christian writer in "Chambers's Encyclopædia" says:—"One remarkable feature of the Moslem rule in Spain deserves mention, as it contrasts them so favorably with the contemporary and subsequent rulers of that country even to the present time, and that is their universal toleration in religious matters." Being a Christian this writer can hardly be accused of partiality to Islam.

Godfrey Higgins, another writer who can safely be called a 19th century Christian at least, says:—" Nothing is so common as to hear the Christian priests abuse the religion of Mohammed for its bigotry and intolerance. Wonderful assurance and hypocrisy! Who was it that expelled the Moriscoes from Spain because they would not turn Christians ? Who was it that

murdered the millions in Mexico and Peru and gave them all away as slaves because they were not Christians? What a contrast have the Mohammedans exhibited in Greece! For many centuries the Christians have been permitted to live in the peaceable possession of their properties, their religion, their priests, bishops, patriarchs, and churches; and the war between the Greeks and Turks was no more waged on account of religion than was the war between the negroes in Demarara and the English. . . . . . . Wherever the Caliphs conquered, if the inhabitants turned Mohammedans, they were instantly on a footing of perfect equality with the conquerors."

An ingenious and learned dissenter, speaking of the Saracens says:—"They persecuted nobody; Jews and Christians all lived happy among them."

Higgins also says:—"In all the history of the Caliphs there cannot be shown anything half so infamous as the Inquisition, nor a single instance of an individual burnt for his religious opinion; nor, do I believe, put to death in a time of peace for simply not embracing Islam."

"But," says the Christian, "all that was characteristic of the centuries long past—Christians are not so bigoted and intolerant to-day." Aren't they? Go to the Philippine Islands, a country with a population of over seven millions of souls, which is and has been under the rule of Christian Spain for 300 years. Try to teach any religious system but the Roman Catholic and see what will happen to you. There is no Mohammedan country on earth that refuses to admit Christian missionaries, and that does not give them ample protection. Three years ago two representatives of the British and Foreign Bible Society of London went to Manila, the capital city of the Philippine Islands, to sell Bibles. One of them died within three weeks after his arrival, and there were people wicked enough to say that he was poisoned at the instigation of some of the Catholic priests. The other was arrested, and thrown into jail on a charge of teaching contrary to the State religion, but was afterwards sent to Singapore by order of the Spanish Government. That was only about three years ago. A few months later seven Buddhist priests from Foo Chow, China, who were induced by their fellow-countrymen in Manila to go there believing that they would be allowed to celebrate a Buddhist ceremony there, were arrested, fined, and sent back to China. A vast volume of evidence might be adduced to show the utter groundlessness of the charge of intoleration. As a matter of fact, intoleration is entirely foreign to the principles of Islam, and no intelligent Moslem would be guilty of, or consent to it.

The essence of the true faith of Islam is resignation to the will of God, and its corner-stone is prayer. It teaches universal fraternity, universal charity, universal love, and universal benevolence, and requires purity of mind, purity of action, purity of speech and perfect physical cleanliness. It is the simplest and most elevating form of religion known to man. It has no paid priesthood, nor elaborate ceremonial, admits no vicarious atonement, nor relieves its followers of any of the responsibility for their sins. It recognizes but one God, the Father of all things, the divine spirit that dwells in all the manifestations of nature, the one omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent ruler of the universe, to whom its followers devoutly pray and before whom all stand upon a platform of perfect equality and fraternity. The devout Mussulman, one who has arrived at an intelligent comprehension of the true teachings of our Holy Prophet, lives in his religion and makes it the paramount principle of his existence. It is with him in all his goings and comings during the day, and he is never so occupied with his business or worldly affairs that he cannot turn his back upon them, when the stated hour of prayer arrives, and present his soul to God. His loves, his sorrows, his hopes, his fears are all immersed in it; it is his last thought when he lies down to sleep at night and the first to enter his mind at dawn when the voice of the Muezzin rings out loudly and clearly from the minaret of the mosque, waking the soft echoes of the morn with its thrilling, solemn, majestic monotones: "Come to Prayer! Come to Prayer! Prayer is better than sleep! Prayer is better than sleep!"

PHILOSOPHIC ISLAM.

A special meeting of the Mohammedans of Hyderabad (Deccan), was held on Friday, Nov. 25, 1892, under a large State pavilion in the Public Garden at 8 o'clock A. M., with about 3,000 persons present, representing all classes of the Mussulman community. Hazarat Syed Shah Abdur Rahim Kamisiul-Kadri, the eminent and generally beloved Mohammedan Saint, presided.

A native poet read one of his productions in Persian in which he referred very hopefully to the proposed American Mission. At the conclusion of the reading, which was vigorously applauded, Nawab Ikbal Yar Jung Bahadur, in brief but forcible speech introduced Mr. Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb who, on arising, was received with enthusiastic cheering. Mr. Webb addressed the meeting for over an hour upon the philosophical aspect of Islam, and was frequently interrupted by vigorous applause. The lecture was translated into Urdu by Moulvi Hassan Ali, the Mohammedan missionary, for the benefit of those who could not understand English. The translation and the style of delivery were very effective and creditable.

Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk Bahadur, the popular and eloquent orator, then thanked the learned lecturer in a brief but felicitous speech which produced a very marked effect upon the audience. The Nawab spoke very encouragingly of the proposed American Mission, and predicted for it the most complete success.

With the usual vote of thanks to the Chair the meeting adjourned.

Following is Mr. Webb's eloquent address in full:—It has been suggested to me that, inasmuch as I am to address an audience composed almost entirely of Mohammedans, many of whom are men of unusual mental culture and attainments, I should devote my remarks to the philosophical aspect of Islam rather than to its popular expression in devotional and social

laws and forms. I certainly cannot hope to tell anyone here anything which he does not already know of Islam as an exoteric religious system; nor would it be possible for me to teach the Islamic philosophy in a dozen lectures even if I should be bold enough to attempt to teach it at all.

Now I am fully aware of the fact that there are many professed Mussulmans who do not know that there is a philosophic side to their religion; and perhaps it is just as well that they do not, for such knowledge might, possibly, lead them away from the plain, safe and simple truths already within their grasp, and out into the broad and dangerous ocean of metaphysical speculation where their frail mental barks would be wrecked upon the rocks of doubt and despair. But in this age of rapidly increasing scepticism and doubt, the legitimate offspring of advanced materialistic education and civilization, there are many minds which require more evidence of the truth of a religious system than the dogmatic assertions of those who claim to be religious authorities. The simple, child-like faith handed down to them by their ancestors has been blighted by the cruel frosts of atheism and agnosticism or frozen to death by our Western nineteenth century civilization.

Now in some respects this condition is a direct and positive benefit, for when the congealed plant thaws out under the warm sunshine of spiritual truth, it is very liable to grow and fructify in a manner impossible to it under the old influences. I will not say that it would have been better if the works of many of our modern materialistic philosophers had never seen the light of day, for it is quite probable that they may prove, after all, very potent factors in bringing the educated, progressive masses into the true path; but it does seem at times as if they were tearing down where there is little or no hope of rebuilding. I am heartily in sympathy with the man who demands a reason for everything, for that has been my condition of mind for twenty years. I abandoned the system improperly called Christianity, soon after I attained my majority, because its teachers could not give me a convincing reason for the faith that was in them. When I was asked to believe that one was really three, and that a just and merciful Creator committed an act of unnatural cruelty simply to gratify a mere whim, I demanded corroborative testimony and was told that none had ever been filed. This very grave omission compelled me to throw the case out of court.

But it seems to me that every rational man should make an earnest, honest, unprejudiced effort to get at the bottom facts concerning his religion, and ascertain to his own complete satisfaction whether it is a mere jumble of whimsical,

purposeless forms and ceremonies, or whether it is based upon the eternal truth. If the atheist and materialist are correct in their conclusions, then there is no reason in the world why man should have a religion at all; but it seems to me that the question is of sufficient importance to man to justify more than a superficial examination. If, as is claimed by the religious world, this present life is but an infinitesimal period as compared to the life beyond, and that the conditions of the future existence are largely determined by our course of conduct and thought here, then it is of vital importance to us to know whether the claim of religion is valid and what *kind* of a religion is necessary in order to bring about the desired results.

And what is religion? Cicero defined it as "that which brings with it the care and cult of some higher power which men call divine."

Max Müller, in his Gifford lectures, after carefully tracing the history of the word, finds that its earliest conception can have meant only respect, care, and reverence; that later on it took the moral sense of scruple and conscience and, lastly, became more and more exclusively applied to the inward feeling of reverence for the gods and to the outward manifestation of that reverence in worship and sacrifice. What the Romans expressed by "religion" was chiefly the moral or practical, not the speculative or philosophical side of religion. The Greeks at first used the word to express fear of the gods or demons and the divine power in a good sense. But very soon it began to be used in a bad sense as expressive of superstition. Marcus Aurelius spoke of it as meaning God-fearing without superstition. Spinoza thinks that practical religion ought always to be simple piety and obedience as distinguished from philosophy and love of knowledge.

The modern definitions are numerous and varied. One philosophical writer says: "Religion is our recognition of the unity of nature and teaches us to consider ourselves as part of the whole."

Another writes: "Theology and metaphysics have nothing to do with morality. Religion has never been other than science plus worship or devotion."

Max Müller says: "We can hardly open a book without meeting with random definitions of religion. Religion is said to be knowledge, and it is said to be ignorance; religion is said to be freedom, and it is said to be dependence; religion is said to be desire, and it is said to be freedom from all desires; religion is said to be silent contemplation, and it is said to be splendid and stately worship of God. People take every kind

of liberty with this old word. Young poets will tell you that poetry is their religion; young artists that their religion is art; while it has been said of old that pure religion is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep yourselves unspotted from the world."

In the consideration of the subject we will find it convenient to keep in sight the dividing line between Religion and Theology, words which are too often used promiscuously. By "religion" we should understand the subject; by "theology" the study or science of that subject.

"Religious ideas of one kind or another," says Herbert Spencer, "are almost universal. We are obliged to admit that if not supernaturally derived, as the majority contend, they must be derived from human experience slowly accumulated and organized. Considering all faculties to result from accumulated modifications, caused by the intercourse of the organism with its environment, we are obliged to admit that there exists in the environment certain phenomena or conditions which have determined the growth of the feeling in question, and so are obliged to admit that it is as normal as any other faculty. We are also forced to infer that this feeling is, in some way, conducive to human welfare."

Now this frank admission affords us a clue to a bit of evidence which will prove of value to us in our investigations, for it will naturally lead us to consider the religious instinct in man and its probable and possible causes. In every age, every clan, tribe and nation has had its idea of religion and its distinctive form of worship; and it would be extremely difficult, not to say impossible to-day, to find, outside of civilized Christendom any collection of men without some sort of form for the expression of their ideas of religion. There are in some of the islands of the Pacific Ocean, tribes which have never, so far as is known, come in contact, or had direct and intelligent intercourse with people professing any of the popular forms of religion; and yet they have religious ceremonies and ideas of *post-mortem* existence which are near enough to those to be found in the Mohammedan, Christian and Buddhist systems to warrant the suspicion that they might have been borrowed from those systems. There are, in the mountainous regions of the Philippine Islands, savage tribes who have never been subdued by the Spaniards, who have the most intense hatred for a white face, and who know of no other country or religion than their own, but who still have religious forms and religions ideas very similar to those of some of the earlier and more superstitious Christian sects.

What is the cause of this religious faculty, which the

evidence at hand proves to be just as normal as any other faculty? It cannot be the result of mere chance nor of education, for it can be clearly traced back through all generations of mankind as far as history leads us, and it is as clearly shown that it was strongest where education was unknown. It is just as much a part of human nature in its uncultured, unrefined condition as it is in its most refined aspect. In fact, we find that there is, as a rule, less religious devotion among the educated than among the uneducated classes.

And now, having reached this point in our journey toward the ideas which I desire to bring to your careful attention, let us turn aside into a familiar path and see whether materialistic science can answer this question and some others which we may find it necessary to ask her. We often hear of the irrepressible conflict between science and religion, but that can only mean the conflict between *materialistic* religion and *materialistic* science, not between *true* religion and *true* science. All efforts to make *materialistic* creeds harmonize with *materialistic* science always have been, and always will be, utterly futile.

Without stopping to analyze the popular creeds or to consider what science knows, let us see what the latter does *not* know. We see the trees growing and the flowers blooming under a steady, unvarying power that scientists call an impenetrable mystery. They have never yet been able to tell us what life really is, whether or not the soul really exists and, if it does, what becomes of it upon the death of the body. The educated physician can tell you the name of every bone, muscle, nerve and organ of the human body, and the location and probable function of all, except the spleen, and yet he is densely ignorant of the power that makes the body a living, breathing man, full of love and hate, and all the passions and inclinations of humanity. A thrust of a knife or a bullet in the heart or brain converts that animated form into an inert, lifeless mass which speedily becomes a heap of festering corruption breeding new life in the form of worms and insects. Can the scientist make the man live and love and hate as he did before? No; something has gone out of him never to return. What is that something, and where has it gone? Science is dumb. Can science tell us what electricity is? No. And yet in the Western world, particularly in America, we have gathered this subtle, mysterious fluid and made it serve us in various ways. We have harnessed it to our street cars, and have forced it to shed its light in our streets and homes. We have even made it carry the human voice for hundreds of miles, and written messages for thousands. And what is it? Science does not know. Science has learned to foretell with reasonable

accuracy the coming of the storm, but it *cannot* tell us what the force is that produces the roaring, shrieking cyclone nor the gentle wind that fans our brows. It does not know what sleep is, nor why we dream. It cannot even tell us how and why we think. Science has done much for this materialistic civilization of ours, and it moves about with a confident, lordly air among those things which it can cut, and melt, and test chemically; but when it stands in the presence of the wonders of life and death and views the operations of those wonderful laws which govern the various manifestations of what we call "nature" it drops its hands and head in helpless confusion.

And yet our sapient philosophers continue to talk seriously and earnestly about the conflict between science and religion, just as if science had really learned all there is to be known about man and nature. Compare what science knows with what she does *not* know, and you will see that she is altogether too ignorant to serve as a guide to anyone who desires to know the higher truths. And yet let me assure you here that there is no known fact in modern science that is not strictly in harmony with the principles of that higher science which is known to but few in these degenerate days.

Do you know what thoughts are? Did you ever try to analyze the motives that prompt the various acts of your lives? A very wise philosopher says:

"It is impossible to define motives accurately, even our own. We cannot say sometimes why we do a thing. Every reason may be against it—common-sense, habit, inclination, experience, duty—all may be pulling one way, and yet we tear ourselves loose and do the thing."

Is this not true? Sit quietly and watch your thoughts as they come unbidden and of their own accord before you, like so many phantoms. Try to catch one and hold it in your mind steadily for ten minutes—or even five—if you can. Before you have held it a minute another will crowd it out of your grasp and slip away from you before you can recover yourself. Are you master of your thoughts? Can you control yourself?

But I fancy I hear someone say: "What is the use in talking about these things, when they are mysteries which no man can solve?"

They are *not* mysteries which no one can solve. It is true that materialistic science cannot solve them, but that is because she is working on lines which really carry her away from the truth, and steadily and persistently avoids the methods that have been clearly pointed out to man. Our

Holy Prophet—peace be with him forever—knew all the mysteries of life and death, and so did Jesus of Nazareth, and so did every other truly inspired prophet the world has ever known. The one truth—the only *real* science—has been handed down from the beginning of human development, through the long line of prophets to Mohammed—*Hazrat Mohammed Sallal laho aliehi wasullam*—and this truth has been offered to mankind earnestly and eloquently, while the masses have turned their backs upon it and have wandered off in search of money and comfort and pleasure.

Let us pause and consider one important fact. The teachings of the prophets, as well as those of materialistic science and our own daily experience, lead us to the conviction that we are different from the animal world. Man, with his freedom of thought and action, his intellectual faculties, his fine discriminating powers, is, and should be, above the animals, although he has the animal instincts within him to a greater or less extent. But is he so very much different from the animals in his general motives and disposition? Let us see. The spider weaves its web in a convenient place where some unlucky fly may be caught in it. What is the spider's motive, so far as we are able to conceive of it? Do you believe that he stops and calmly and deliberately reasons that the body of the fly will assist his own physical development if he eats it? The most logical and reasonable inference is that he doesn't think about the matter at all, but is forced by an irresistible impulse to catch the fly and eat it, or that he has discovered that flies taste good. From his general conduct we believe that he is incapable of reasoning. Suppose that all the spiders in the world should suddenly become possessed of the impulse to refrain from eating—the development of the species would cease and it would become extinct. Now, the human spider is different—he is capable of reasoning; and when he weaves his web in which to catch a human victim he calculates that the victim will yield so many rupees. What does he want the rupees for—to do good with, to make his brother-man happier and better? Sometimes; but usually he wants the rupees to buy comfort and pleasure for himself, and to enable him to gratify his own animal tastes and instincts. The cow and horse are impelled to eat and drink, not as the result of any regular, consecutive reasoning, but by that irresistible impulse which compels the animal world to push forward its physical development. Man, on the contrary, beside the instinct of physical development, has also the intellectual and higher spiritual faculties. Is it his first aim and purpose in this life to develop these faculties, or does he yield himself

willingly to the animal instinct and make his life's motive the acquirement of those things which he believes will give him bodily comfort and pleasure? If you will ask the young man who is striving to secure a perfect and complete education why he is doing so, he may tell you that his first purpose is to fit himself to be of service to humanity; but isn't it quite probable that his real motive is to win the respect and admiration of the world, to secure a good social position and just a little money in the future? Let me assure you here that I am not trying to depreciate education and the development of the intellectual powers. I want to try to induce you to analyze yourselves and to learn the general drift of humanity. Our Prophet once said that he who knew himself knew God; if you will study yourselves you will certainly find the subject interesting, to say the least.

"And what has all this to do with our religion and the mysteries of life and death?" someone may ask.

Everything. It brings you face to face with the fact that science, modern science, which the average educated man regards with awe and admiration, and which many consider not only reliable, but infallible, is utterly powerless to explain the most important problems of human life, and is forced to confess its inability to do so. It also offers *suggestions* calculated to lead the thinking man to believe that there may be ways of acquiring this valuable knowledge that science has never heard of.

Is it worth any man's time and effort to ascertain whether there is really any conscious life beyond the grave, and what it is necessary for him to do in order to secure the best condition that life can afford? That is a question which every man must answer for himself. If it is true that there is a future life, the inference is only reasonable that it must cover a very much longer period than the sixty or seventy years we have upon this earth. Hence, it seems to me the most important subject that can possibly engage the attention of anyone.

"But," says the sceptic, "of course we want to find out all these things; but how are we going to do so? We have read John Stuart Mill, and Huxley, and Tyndall, and Darwin, and Fichte, and everything else that we could find, and still we are at sea. We have appealed to science, and she not only admits her ignorance and says that no one can know the mysteries of life, but she actually proves, by her own methods, for which, by the way, we have great respect, that our religion is not in harmony with her conclusion. What are we to do?"

Now what would you think of a man who tried to take a screw out of a piece of hard wood with a gimlet and insisted upon it that the thing couldn't be done because the tool wouldn't fit into the slot of the screw? Wouldn't you quite naturally and properly call him an idiot and tell him to go and get a screw-driver?

Now modern science has found that its gimlet will not turn the screw of spiritual dynamics, and therefore declares that it cannot be turned. Now what rather surprises me is that the sceptic clings so tenaciously to that gimlet when there is a screw-driver so near at hand.

This is rather a homely comparison, I admit, but I think it expresses the situation better than anything else I can think of at present.

Every true prophet the world has ever known has pointed out the way to the solution of the problems of life and death and every sceptic and materialist has stubbornly and foolishly persisted in ignoring it and following the path which leads directly away from it. He clings to the gimlet and refuses to take the screw-driver when it is offered to him. And why? Simply and solely because if he follows the true way he must give up some of the pleasures and comforts of this earthly life—and, above all, he is afraid that his friends and neighbors will laugh at him and avoid his society. Is this not true?

Suppose that some bright, intelligent, popular young man should say to his friends: "I am going to be perfectly pure, perfectly unselfish, perfectly good and perfectly holy; I am going to attend carefully to my religious duties and worship God with all my heart and soul; I am going to tear myself away from the animal side of my nature and cultivate and develop only the higher attributes which God has given me; I will love my fellow-man as if he were my brother, and do my whole duty to God and man."

How long do you believe that that young man would be popular with his friends and associates? Do you believe that they would seek or even tolerate his society very long after he had adopted this course of life? The truth is that very few people are willing to make this sacrifice even to learn that higher knowledge which they would all like to acquire. When you strike at a man's comfort, pleasure, ambition or pocket, he will either hastily beat a retreat, carrying his treasures with him, or fight like a demon to retain them.

There comes to my mind the picture of a grand and noble figure in history—one of the grandest and noblest that man has ever known; a calm, majestic man, in whose personality

there is something that commands respect, admiration and awe. His countenance beams with the glory of divine inspiration as he stands with his back against one of the rough pillars of the rude little mosque in Medina, in the erection of which his own hands assisted. Around him are seated a company of men who listen with eager attention to the words that fall from his lips, while they gaze upon him with rapt reverence and devotion. He has given up all that men of the world prize and toil for, has submitted to the cruelest, most inhuman insults and persecution that could be invented by wicked, selfish people who were formerly his admirers and friends; has endured pains and sorrows and disappointments that would have utterly broken an ordinary man. And yet in his heart there is no malice, no desire for revenge, no selfish ambition, no hatred; his soul is full of peace and joy and love, for the divine light pervades his whole being. Patiently and earnestly he points out to his humble followers the true way to eternal life, while they listen gratefully and attentively, letting his words sink deep into their hearts, and treasuring them there in all their daily lives. They do not question the truth of his teaching—they do not doubt—but say: "Show us the way and we will walk in it trustfully and loyally until we have found the priceless jewel of eternal truth."

And what is the way pointed out by this grandest of all prophets? Islam! Resignation to the will of God; the omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent God, who stands ready to lead the aspiring soul out of the darkness of materialism into that light which shines for all as a guide to Paradise. The way has been clearly pointed out, and if man will not follow it he cannot expect to see beyond the limits of the material world.

The Holy Koran tells us that God is nearer to every man than his jugular vein; that "He guideth not unbelieving people;" that "He guideth whomsoever He listeth." What does this mean when taken with that other saying of our Prophet: "He who knows himself knows God?" The meaning must be clear to every intelligent person.

Materialistic science has discovered, as many a man who knows nothing about science has learned from his own experience, that the continued exercise of any organ of the human body will strengthen that organ, and that protracted rest will weaken it and ultimately render it useless. If I rest my right arm on any object long enough, or allow it to hang quietly at my side, it will become atrophied and I will be unable to raise it at all. The same law governs the intellectual faculties; if I use my memory and by practice obtain perfect control over it,

it will become phenomenally strong in time. How do we learn languages? It is a well-established fact that it is much more difficult for a man to learn a language after he is 40 years of age than it is when he is younger. What is the reason? Because in his younger years he is exercising those parts of his physical and mental organism that are destined to control his character, and is acquiring powers and forces that it is exceedingly difficult to overcome. During youth these powers and forces are forming, and knowledge of languages readily joins with other kinds of knowledge. We very soon acquire habits good or bad, and often they become so strong that they pass beyond our control. There are many people who are absolutely slaves to liquor and tobacco—they cannot refrain from using them, and seem to be utterly helpless victims to these habits. When a young man first begins the use of whiskey or tobacco it is quite an easy matter for him to break away from them, but after he has used them for years it is quite another matter. I am aware that this condition is considered by some physicians as wholly physical, but I am firmly convinced that it is largely mental, as most of the ailments that afflict humanity usually are. Let anyone who has tried to give up a bad habit study his own sensations, and see what the result will be.

The human body has no sensation after the soul has left it; it is quite clear that sensation does not originate in it, but is manifested only while it is occupied by the soul. Put a live coal upon the flesh of a living man and he will wince with pain, but you may cover the corpse with coals and there will not be the slightest evidence of sensation. It is the soul that thinks and feels, not the body. The body of itself without the soul cannot crave liquor nor tobacco. Does the craving cease when the body dies? No, not if the soul is immortal, and, personally, I am fully convinced that it is. Now, suppose we accept the hypothesis that this craving clings to the soul after death, and it has no body through which, or by means of which, it can gratify or satisfy it; would not the suffering be intensified a hundred-fold? Now, this is only a hypothetical case and should not be taken in any sense as a declaration of truth; I advance it simply as a subject for speculative thought. My purpose has been to show by a chain of logical reasoning that the hidden elements of our being are capable of development and cultivation quite as readily and fully as any of the parts of our physical organism. If this be true, one can obtain an idea of the results which may follow the direction of the mental force away from the lower or animal parts of our nature and toward its higher or spiritual

parts. The cultivation of fraternal love, perfect cleanliness of mind and body, and devotion to God, must certainly develop those higher faculties of our nature to a degree which will enable them to dominate our whole being.

I think I have said enough to show that it is not the blind, slavish following of the forms and practices of religion that is effective, but that the purpose, the motive, must come from the heart, and that in order to reach the sublime heights of knowledge, one must enter into the spirit of his faith with zeal and earnestness. If man will not yield himself to the guidance of God, but turns himself against the higher spirit within him, and follows the lower elements of his nature, his development will be physical and downward, instead of spiritual and upward. He will be of those of whom the Holy Koran says:

"God hath put a seal on their hearts and their hearing, and over their eyes is a veil, and for them is grievous punishment."

"Their case is like unto the case of one who kindleth a fire and when it hath lighted up that which is around him, God taketh away their light and leaveth them in darkness, so they do not see."

I have repeatedly been asked the question: "How do you propose to introduce Islam into America?" As if it was a task in which I alone was interested and in which God had no part. Some people have expressed doubt as to the ultimate success of the Islamic mission in my country, saying that the people were too progressive and too highly developed intellectually to receive and follow it. This doubt is born of ignorance of the true principles of Islam. One of my reasons for believing that the Americans will accept Islam, when it is properly and fairly presented to them is, that they *are* progressive and intelligent. The idea that Islam is a system adapted only to the minds of the ignorant, superstitions and partially developed portions of humanity is certainly most erroneous. It is the one eternal truth and not only commends itself to the reason of man, but satisfies the longings of his soul for higher and better conditions.

"But," said a doubter to me in Bombay, "do you expect that the Americans will pray five times a day and fast and adopt polygamy and the purdah system, and do everything else that the Mohammedans of the East do?"

I know that there are many thousands of well-balanced people in America who are capable of understanding and appreciating what is good and reasonable, and I believe that the power and influence of Almighty God may be felt there just as strongly as it can in India or any other part of the world.

We propose to present Islam to the people as plainly and logically as it is possible to present it, and to leave the results of its practical operation with God. I know very little of the practical application of the purdah system or of polygamy in the East, and, therefore, cannot say whether they are practiced in the true Islamic spirit or not. If they are not applied properly and justly they cannot produce good results; but in my humble opinion the purdah system and polygamy, rationally and intelligently engrafted upon our social system, are the only possible remedies for the evils with which it is afflicted to-day. Prostitution, marital infidelity, drunkenness and kindred vices are prevalent from one end of the vast country to the other. Orthodox Christianity and orthodox Christian laws have fought in vain against these evils for a hundred years, and still they have steadily increased. Now, I believe that Islam and Islamic laws should have an opportunity to try and rid our social system of the monsters of sin that are preying upon it.

I honestly believe that within five years we will have a Moslem brotherhood in America very strong numerically and composed of just as earnest and faithful Mussulmans as the world has ever seen.

For the past ten years I have carefully watched the course of religious thought in my country and have been in a position which enabled me to view the field to advantage. I have seen the masses of intelligent people drifting away from the Christian churches and forming themselves into free-thought societies, ethical culture societies, non-sectarian societies and numerous other organizations the purpose of which is to seek religious truth. Beside these, there are the Spiritualists, the Theosophists, and an infinite number of other smaller bodies which follow no religious system. Then, too, there are the Unitarians, who, I am satisfied, will adopt Islam when they really know what it is.

I believe that the strongest reason why Islam is not the prevailing religious system in America to-day is because it has been so grossly misunderstood and misrepresented by those Christian writers who have attempted to present it to the world in the English language. The masses of the English speaking world know nothing at all of Islam, except what they have acquired from such prejudiced Christian writers as Sale and Irving. Ask almost any American Christian if he knows who and what Mohammed was and what the Islamic system is, and he will promptly answer yes. But when you come to question him as to the sources of his information he will tell you that all he has read upon the subject is Sale or Irving, or both, and the letters that some of the misguided Christian

missionaries have sent home from the East. The most absurd and impossible tales about the Mohammedans in circulation among our Christians have emanated from the missionaries who seem to see all the faults of Mussulmans around them and none of their virtues. If a Mohammedan commits a crime or expresses an absurd superstition, they send a report of it home labeled: "An Article of Mohammedan Faith."

Some years ago there was a fanatical Christian in America who thought that God had called upon him to sacrifice his youngest daughter to prove his faith. He tied the child on an altar after the manner in which he supposed that Abraham tied his son, and plunged a knife into its heart. He afterward said that he fully expected God to interfere in time to save the victim's life as He did in Abraham's case. Of course he was arrested, tried for murder and sent to a lunatic asylum. I never heard that the report was circulated among Mohammedans that Christians believed in killing their children as sacrifices to God. But let some unbalanced Mohammedan commit an insane act and the chances are that the Western Christians will be told that such acts form a part of the Mohammedan faith.

Now it is errors of this sort, as well as many others that have crept into the Western mind, that we shall seek to overturn. Our plan of operation includes the establishment of a weekly high-class journal for the explanation of the Islamic doctrines as well as the dissemination of general information relative to Mohammedans and Mohammedan social laws; a free library and reading-room, a book and pamphlet publishing house, and a lecture-room where lectures will be delivered once or twice a week, or as often as the circumstances seem to warrant.

In carrying out this project I want to feel that the prayers and good wishes of the Mussulmans of the East are with us; that they are interested in the work and will do all they can to help it along. I want to take your hand and carry it across the sea to be seized in an earnest, fraternal grasp by the people of America. I want the Mussulmans of the East to be united with those of the West in that true spirit of fraternity which our Prophet so plainly taught. The Moslem brotherhood should extend to the four corners of the earth, not in name only, but in the true spirit of perfect unity.

There was a time when Islam was the glory of the world, when it was the centre and inspiration of all that was grand and noble and exalting; the heart and soul of the arts and sciences; the civilizer and teacher of mankind. Will history ever repeat itself in this respect? I hope so.

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